

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 remain pending in this application.

Claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Ikeda (US 5,937,391). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is directed to management of points provided to a uscr comprising a number of elements in combination. The claimed combination includes a confirmation step, a designation acceptance step, a subtraction step and an addition step. The confirmation step confirms an expiration date of a giving source user's points after accepting a request for giving points from the giving source user. The number and expiration date of the giving source user's points are stored in a database. The designation acceptance step accepts from the giving source user a designation of a number of non-expired points and a destination user. The subtraction step subtracts the designated number of points from the giving source user's number of points stored in the database. The addition step adds the number of points to the giving destination user's number of points stored in the database.

A similar combination of elements, wherein a designated number of points for giving are subtracted from the giving source user's number of points and added to the giving destination user's number of points, is neither disclosed nor suggested by Ikeda.

Ikeda discloses a points system provided by an online shopping mall. When a customer makes a purchase at the mall, the system issues points based on the purchase amount. The system also allows a customer to redeem accumulated points in the form of discounts on mall purchases. Issued points are added to a customer's entry in a points management table (FIG. 14, step 24 or step 25), and redeemed points are subtracted from the customer's entry in the points management table (FIG. 14, step 31). However, in no situation does Ikeda allow a customer to give away the customer's own accumulated points to another customer. The points system of Ikeda does not subtract points from a giving user's account and add those points to a receiving user's account as claimed.

Accordingly, since Ikeda does not provide the teachings for which it is cited, the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims should be withdrawn. Further, since claims 5, 9 and 13 recite similar combinations, wherein a designated number of points for giving are subtracted from the giving source user's number of points and added to the giving destination user's number of points, the rejection of claims 5, 9 and 13 and their dependent claims should also be withdrawn.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692004700.

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